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An Academic Teams Program to provide opportunities for developing optimum learning potential and for fulfilling desires of talented students is proposed. The program will be initiated through a series of discussions with students, faculty, parents, and consultants. The area of concentration for the selected teams of students will be in the field of current affairs. There will be three junior academic teams, each not to exceed ten members. Participants will be chosen by competitive selection. The criteria for selection will be set up by an advisory committee. There will be one faculty-member sponsor to each team. Topics that are relative to current affairs and that are selected for study and discussion by individual teams will represent an area of concentration for a predetermined period of time.

Student participants will receive instruction in the techniques of conducting research, documenting information, and organizing materials. They will encounter problem-solving situations that require maximum skills, and that provide training and experience for roles in adult society. Consultants will be invited to meet with the groups when necessary to provide training in group dynamics, speech, and research procedures. A senior academic team will be formed; and senior team members lost through graduation will be replaced by outstanding members of the junior teams.

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ACADEMIC TEAMS PROGRAM

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NOVA HIGH SCHOOL

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
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SOUTH FLORIDA EDUCATION CENTER

NOVA ACADEMIC TEAMS PROGRAM

By

Arthur B. Wolfe
Director
Nova High School

3600 Southwest 70 Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida

ED002337

NOVA ACADEMIC TEAMS PROGRAM

It is rather difficult for teachers and educators generally to visualize the breadths and depths of knowledge within which the very talented students can achieve if provided wide opportunities through the leadership of extremely competent teachers.

Many of the motivating factors for students to achieve well, such as graduation, class standing, college board scores, acceptance for college entrance, etcetera, are no longer sufficient to seriously challenge the very talented students. Higher goals and greater recognition must be offered. The great minds of the next generation will be those that have been cultivated and challenged from a very early age in a manner that will exceed the opportunities given those of present and past generations. This must be done to compensate for the great increase in knowledge to be acquired and the competition to be expected.

Secondary schools have made significant strides during the past several years by providing accelerated courses, multi-track curricula, early college entrance programs, and other changes in an effort to upgrade the quality of academic programs. These are improvements which were sorely needed, but even greater strides must be taken if the secondary schools are to keep pace with the demand and opportunities to challenge talented and excited young minds.

Schools which offer opportunities for selected students to participate in contests, "Quiz Kid" type performances, or other kinds of

exhibitions which require students to be masters in the art of recall of factual information are not seizing the real opportunity to develop talent in the areas of inquiry, discovery or creativity. In this scientific age these processes must become part of the development of each student's learning potential. The knowledge explosion in all areas during the past decade must be considered and utilized by this and future generations if a more enlightened citizenry is to develop through progressive levels of sophistication.

Initial leadership in the design and operation of instructional programs for the very talented students must come from educators who hold responsible positions in areas of administration. By authority vested in the position, these educators control and influence changes in organizational structure for programs under their jurisdiction. School administrators also have the further responsibility of providing leadership in developing procedures leading to general improvement. It is believed that students, parents, the lay public and educators at the instructional level recognize the need for new and challenging opportunities for very talented students to exercise their abilities to inquire, discover and create at extremely mature levels. The school administrator can develop a working relationship with these groups through social processes which will develop active support for this type program. With this support, a program can be initiated and operated successfully. However, the full potential will probably not be realized until the program has gone through a period of experimentation, with each step being thoroughly evaluated under research

procedures. The hour is late, but not too late for bold strides to develop exciting and challenging learning opportunities for the increased number of very talented students.

Physical facilities at Nova High School are completely new and as modern and complete as those of any school found today. An entirely new and exciting learning environment has been created to serve instruction, incorporating all recognized significant characteristics of a modern secondary school. Flexibility and adaptability have been built into the physical plant, not only to serve the present program, but to accommodate changes that may occur in the future.

Proposed: An Academic Teams Program

To supplement the Nova Plan, it is proposed that a Nova Academic Teams Program be developed and administered in the high school. This program will provide new and broad opportunities for developing optimum learning potential and fulfilling the desires of very talented students. Both physical and human resources are available at present to carry out this proposal. The Academic Teams Program will not reduce, but will reinforce, the total effort now given to develop the full learning potential of all students currently enrolled at Nova. It is envisioned that this program--both in depth and breadth--will extend far beyond the expected level of achievement for even talented students. The impact of this program certainly would give support to Nova academic aims and objectives at all levels. Competition generated by an attempt to win a place on an academic team will help to establish new learning goals for all students.

Organization of Nova Academic Teams

The Nova program will be initiated through a series of discussions with the students in school, faculty, parents and consultants. Printed outlines of the program will be made available to students and parents.

The area of concentration of study for initially selected teams of students will be in the general field of current affairs. Other fields, such as science, mathematics, humanities, etcetera, may be added as the ability and interests of team members develop, or by the organization of additional academic teams. Initially, three junior academic teams will be organized, each not to exceed ten members.

Students desiring to participate in the program will submit to competitive selection. The advisory committee will establish criteria to be used in the selection of members for each team. No single factor should exercise an over-riding influence in the final decision made. Following are examples of ability and interest characteristics that will be given consideration in the selection of each member:

- Academic class standing
- Ability in oral and written expression
- Reading ability
- Demonstrated initiative
- Test for creativeness
- Intelligence quotients
- Citizenship characteristics
- Ability, aptitude and achievement test scores
- Originality of oral and written expression

The advisory committee will establish procedures for evaluating these criteria. Successful applicants will be assigned to a junior team. Each team may select a name or slogan for team identification. The Nova school director will appoint a member of the faculty to serve as sponsor

for each of the teams. Minimum training of two hours each week will be expected of each team. The time and place of meeting will be scheduled when members are not required to attend regularly-scheduled classes. Each team will be permitted to design its own type of organization to serve its purposes and objectives. The faculty sponsor will cultivate the spirit of team competition. Appropriate recognition for the high honor of being selected for team membership will be determined by the school administration with the assistance of the advisory committee.

Topics relative to current affairs selected for study and discussion by individual teams will represent an area of concentration for a predetermined period of time.

Purpose of Academic Teams Program

Students participating in the program will receive instruction in the techniques of basic research procedures, documenting information, organizing materials, group dynamics, presenting evidence orally and exercising imaginative explorations. Participants will encounter problem solving situations requiring maximum skill in all areas of instruction. This training and experience will have significant carry-over value for students as each pursues a leadership role in adult society. The cultural economic, emotional and aesthetic values of these students are more likely to be congruent with the expectations of a democratic society and will be a stabilizing influence in societal affairs.

Academic Team Contest Procedures

The advisory committee will approve carefully designed problems

submitted by consultants. The design of each problem will include a set of clearly defined scoring procedures which will provide opportunities for competing teams to gain a positive score at several check points enroute to an acceptable solution. Additional positive scores may be gained by efficiency in procedures, originality, and quality of solution. Each participant may serve in the role of a decision maker, a consultant, or advisor. In each case, the participants must assume or share the risk or reward for decisions made in the solution to a given problem. Contest rules will minimize skilled oratorical presentation and team debate. Major credit will be awarded for logical solutions arrived at through perceptive thought and systematic procedures.

Intramural contests will be held frequently during periods of team training. Interscholastic contests will be a major objective as teams are organized in other schools. Nova High School will exert strong efforts to bring together on occasions a number of teams from other areas or states for tournament contests.

Academic Team Training

Faculty sponsors will be responsible for securing services of carefully selected and talented laymen to meet with teams as guest discussants and advisors. Consultants will be invited to meet with the groups whenever necessary to provide training in techniques of group dynamics, speech, and research procedures. Team members will attend meetings regularly and will participate to the full extent of their abilities and interests. Each member shall exhibit a high degree of cooperativeness and willingness as a worthy

member of the team. Faculty sponsors will evaluate the attitude and progress of individual members and make recommendations to the advisory committee at the end of each trimester relative to the retention, dismissal or demotion of team members. No member should be retained who has not continued to be entirely worthy of team membership. Vacancies in team quotas will be filled by the advisory committee upon the recommendation of the faculty sponsor. In making such appointments, criteria considered for original membership will be applied.

Senior Academic Team

During the next school year the advisory committee, through recommendations of various faculty sponsors of the three teams, will select a senior academic team--not to exceed ten members-- from the membership of the junior teams. The senior team will maintain the same system of operation as the junior groups. The senior group will represent the school in interscholastic competitive contests and will be given appropriate recognition for attaining this very high honor. The faculty sponsor will also make recommendations to the advisory committee at the end of each trimester relative to the attitude and performance of senior team members. Team members lost through dismissal, demotion by the advisory committee, or through graduation will be replaced by outstanding members from the junior team.

There will be only one senior academic team. Membership on this team will be highly selective and members will be expected to maintain exemplary standards of conduct and display positive mature attitudes that

will reflect credit on the Nova School. There will be teams organized at various sub-senior levels as the need arises. Faculty sponsors will be directly responsible to the school administration for the general welfare and conduct of teams.

Organization of the Advisory Committee

Membership of the advisory committee will consist of the County Superintendent of Public Instruction, or his representative, the Director of Nova, two members of the Nova staff, and two additional educators to be appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction upon the recommendation of the Director. The sponsor of an academic team may not serve as a member of the advisory committee. They may not be parents of students enrolled in the Nova School. Tenure of membership of the advisory committee shall be as follows:

Superintendent of the Board of Public Instruction - continuous
Director of Nova - continuous
One member of the faculty shall serve for one year and one member for two years
One educator (Nova staff excluded) shall be appointed for one year and one for a term of two years.

As terms expire, appointments will be made to fill vacancies in the same manner as original appointments.

This committee may recommend consultants to advise the subcommittees, conduct research, or train teams. Members of the advisory committee may not serve as consultants or advisors to academic teams.

Refinements and changes should be made from time to time as desirable to promote the high level of learning opportunities for

participants. The committee also will advise on procedures necessary for the efficient operation of the program within guidelines outlined, provided that no action of the committee conflicts with policies of the school or Board of Public Instruction for Broward County.

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